

## **What does the Bible say about Debt?**

**The borrower is slave to the lender.** When you are in debt to another, you enter into a slave/master relationship with your creditor. (Proverbs 22:7)

**God wants us to lend to others.** Obviously, this is difficult if you don't have anything to lend. (Deuteronomy 15:6, 28:12, Matthew 5:42)

**We are required to pay back what we borrowed.** It is easy to take this lightly, but if we borrowed it, we should pay it back. (Psalm 37:21, Ecclesiastes 5:4).

## **What the Bible does NOT say about debt**

**That it is a sin to be in debt.** Like mentioned above, it is not God's best for us, but the Bible does not say that it is a sin.

**There are no instances in the Bible where God provides through a loan.** He provided for His people in many ways but loans were not one of them. That is something to think about next time you get tempted to reach for the credit card. (added later: see the comments below regarding this. A reader pointed out an instance where it can be argued that God did encourage borrowing.)

Here are some more Bible verses about debt.

## **What are the Biblical promises about debt**

The way I look at it, Jesus came to set us free from the bondage of sin. We were slaves to sin, until He set us free. If He wanted to set us free in one area, why would He want us to be slaves in another?

I also love **Deuteronomy 28:12**:

“The Lord will open for you His good storehouse, the heavens, to give rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hand; and you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow.”

This verse is one of the promises that I stand on when praying about my debt. The prerequisite listed in Deuteronomy 28:1 is that we “diligently obey the Lord your God.”

## **God can NOT keep us out of debt**

I believe God would love to see His children living debt-free lives. But, as stewards of the money that He has entrusted to us we have a free will to do what we wish with it. We can choose to give it, save it, spend it, or even spend more than we have.

I also believe that God will work on our behalf to help get us out of debt, but we have a

big part to play - to stop spending more than we have! It doesn't matter how much God provides - **as long as we are spending more money than we have, we will always be in debt.**

### **It's bigger than us**

As Christians we have the opportunity to use our finances to build God's Kingdom. Every decision we make with our money may be much larger than we realize.

Speaking for myself, I know it is easy to get caught up in trying to store up treasures on earth, when I know I should be storing them up in heaven. Every time I do, I get a gentle nudge back on to the narrow path that I am so thankful for. Storing up treasures in heaven is the way to live!

### **Bankruptcy and the Bible**

Let me preface this by saying, while I have been in deep debt, I have never been to the point where I couldn't pay my bills. I have had some people really close to me go through it and I have seen how scary it can be. Just remember that you always have hope in God. He said that He will never leave you or forsake you - ask Him for help.

### **What does the Bible say about bankruptcy?**

God's laws supercede national and local laws. Just because you can go to Las Vegas and legally get a hooker, doesn't mean that it is okay with God. The tough truth is that bankruptcy seems to work the same way. Just because it is legal, doesn't mean that God wants us to do it.

#### **Psalm 37:21**

The wicked borrows and does not pay back, but the righteous is gracious and gives.

#### **Ecclesiastes 5:5**

It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay.

The problem with bankruptcy is that it is the Government who is saying that you are off the hook with your bills. In most cases the businesses that you owe money to probably would still like to collect payment. It is actually doing a great disservice to the companies that you owe money to. Essentially, the borrower/buyer made a promise to pay, but is allowed (via bankruptcy) to break the agreement.

I remember a guitar I sold for \$800 and agreed to let the buyer pay me in installments. I ended up only receiving \$400 from the buyer only to never see him again. Everyone has stories like these and knows that it's not fun when someone doesn't hold up their end of the bargain.

When someone files for bankruptcy, this is basically what is happening to each of the businesses that are expecting payment. While I am sure most of them are credit card companies and other lending institutions, it is not an excuse for doing something wrong.

If the businesses themselves forgave the debt, it would be a different story. Realistically, this is rarely the case.

### **I am drowning in debt and bankruptcy is my only option!**

God is great at getting us out of tough situations that we get ourselves into. Ask Him for help and He will not let you down. And be prepared to fight to get out of debt, because it is going to be a fight. Just because God is helping you doesn't mean that it is going to be a walk in the park. But you can be assured that if you do it God's way (even though it may take longer) you will be greatly rewarded! It is worth it.

As far as practical steps I would read articles about getting out of debt, go to the library and read Dave Ramsey's Total Money Makeover. That book has been a tremendous help to many people who thought that bankruptcy was the only way out.

### **What about debt consolidation companies?**

I would suggest trying to avoid them as well. That said, definitely do a bill consolidation rather than filing bankruptcy. But still avoid it if at all possible. The reason is that most of the bill consolidation companies negotiate with your lenders to get your payments lowered which is nice, but there are a few problems here.

- **It is only a temporary fix to the problem.** If you don't put that freed up cash to good use, you are going to be worse off than you were before.
- **The bill consolidation company has to get paid to.** This is just another hand reaching in the pot wanting to get paid.
- **You can negotiate with (at least some of) the lenders yourself.** Yes, they negotiate with lenders all the time so they are probably better at it than you will be, but it is worth trying. Believe me, lenders want to get paid something rather than nothing. So, if you communicate with them and put forth a good faith effort, most of them are going to work with you. Give it a shot, you have nothing to lose.

### **Are you looking for help getting out of debt?**

Great, I think you have come to the right place. At the time of this writing, I am right there

with you on this journey to break free from the “slavery” that the Bible calls debt (Proverbs 22:7). It is not easy, but it also isn’t that difficult either. Over the last two years my wife and I have paid off nearly \$30,000 in consumer debts from some mistakes that we made in the past.

The 7 steps that I am going to take you through are things that we did to pay down our debt or we would have done if we had the opportunity. Each article is fairly long, so you can feel free to bookmark it and come back later or use the print button towards the bottom of each article to print them out.

If you are serious about getting out of debt, I recommend that you read each article, even though the first two are a bit less practical than the last five. I believe that they the first two include the keys to successfully getting out of debt.